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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3203
INFO RUEHXK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 002012

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE, NSC FOR ABRAMS/PASCUAL/RAMCHAND

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/10/2018

TAGS: KWBG PREL PTER IS PGOV

SUBJECT: PALESTINIAN RECONCILIATION MEETING COLLAPSES AMID HAMAS BOYCOTT

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. PLO and Palestinian faction leaders told ConGenOffs that the GOE "postponed" reconciliation talks, scheduled for November 10 in Cairo, after Hamas indicated it would not participate. PLO Secretary-General Yasir Abd Rabbo told press November 9 that Hamas has been creating obstacles to the talks and Hamas' refusal to participate is part of "a regional boycott designed to make Egyptian efforts fail." Fatah leaders and PM Salam Fayyad said Hamas used false claims of "political detainees" as a pretext to avoid participating in Cairo talks. Hamas leaders lashed out at PA President Mahmud Abbas (Abu Mazen) to shift blame for the breakdown. End summary.

Hamas Boycotts GOE-Sponsored Conference

¶2. (SBU) According to PLO and Palestinian faction leaders, the GOE "postponed" factional talks scheduled for November 10 in Cairo after Hamas indicated it would not participate. PLO Secretary-General Yasir Abd Rabbo told press November 9 that the PLO regrets Hamas' refusal and, from the beginning, Hamas has created obstacles to prevent the talks from succeeding. He praised GOE efforts but said Hamas' refusal to participate is part of "a regional boycott designed to make Egyptian efforts fail."

¶3. (C) Independent Gaza-based PLC member Rawiya al-Shawwa, a member of the independent delegation that included PLC members Ziad Abu Amr and Mustafa Barghuthi, told PolOff by phone November 9 that the GOE "postponement" is in fact a cancellation. She said independent delegation does not expect talks to be renewed in Cairo soon and reconciliation efforts are "dead for now."

Assigning Blame: Fatah, Fayyad Point to Hamas Refusals; Hamas Lashes Out at Abbas

¶4. (U) Senior Fatah Revolutionary Council member Azzam al-Ahmad told press November 8 that Hamas had long planned a last-minute boycott, and used false claims of "political detainees" as a pretext. Al-Ahmad said the lack of internal Hamas consensus is the real reason for the conference's cancellation.

¶5. (SBU) PM Salam Fayyad told press November 8 that the PA does not have any "political detainees," and the Cairo document was "prepared as an Egyptian-Arab initiative based on factional consensus and is a just document." Fayyad said Hamas demands for release of "political detainees" is an excuse and an attempt to discredit PA security efforts.

¶6. (SBU) Gaza-based Hamas leader Mahmud al-Zahar told local press November 8-9 that President Abbas and the PA security forces (PASF), under USG pressure, are responsible for the

breakdown, because they carried out "unprecedented political arrests" of Hamas activists and poisoned the atmosphere. Amman-based Politburo member Muhammad Nazzal publicly accused Abbas on November 8 of bad faith in factional negotiations, and of an agenda "to extend his term as PA President."

WALLES